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WILD BILL PECOS

JUNE 1949

10¢

THE WESTERNER

WANTED

COMICS

JOHNNY TRIGGER

EARL MORELL

THESE TWO MEN PERPETRATED THE GREATEST GOLD RUSH SWINDLE IN THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES! READ THEIR EXCITING STORY!

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BLOW UP THE DAM, PETE! WE'VE GOT TO FLOOD THE VALLEY AND WIPE OUT THE LOPEZ RANCHO!...HEY, LOOK OUT!

WILD BILL PECOS!

LEMME OUTTA HERE!

YOU MURDERING VARMINTS!

BANG!

MORT LEAV

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the WESTERNER

GUNMAN'S GOLD

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EVERYONE HAS HEARD OF THE FABULOUS GOLD RUSHES THAT BROUGHT HORDES OF EAGER PROSPECTORS FLOCKING INTO CALIFORNIA AND ALASKA! BUT HISTORY TELLS OF ANOTHER KIND OF GOLD RUSH... THAT DEVELOPED INTO ONE OF THE GREATEST SWINDLES OF MODERN TIMES!

FOLLOW **WILD BILL PECOS** AND HIS GRIZZLED PAL, NUGGETS NUGENT, AS THEY RIDE THE DANGER TRAIL INTO THE TERRITORY RULED BY...

GUNMAN'S GOLD!

MORT LEAV

THAT'S THE STAGE WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR! **LET'S GO MEN!**

DADBUST IT, BILL, IF I COULDN'T GIT AWFUL USED TO A LIFE OF EASE AND LUXURY! YES, SIREE! NO INJUNS TO WORRY ABOUT, NO GUNFIGHTS, NO...

WHAT'S THAT?

the WESTERNER

BANDITS! THEY'RE AFTER THE GOLD THIS STAGE IS CARRYING!

WHAT WERE YOU SAYING ABOUT A LIFE OF EASE AND LUXURY?

CONSARN YOU, BILL! DON'T RUB IT IN!

BANG!

PTUI!

AAGHHH!

THEY GOT THE DRIVER!

I'LL TAKE OVER! KEEP ME COVERED NUGGETS!

@☆!!$!!, THEY'RE RIDIN' IN THE BLIND SPOT! THAT AIN'T PLAYIN' FAIR!

THE TRACE LINES BROKE! GET UP HERE NUGGETS! QUICK!

SNAP

WE SHORE GIT INTO BAD SITUATIONS!

CAN'T STAY HERE TO BE BULLET BAIT!

JUMP!

I JUST HOPE IT CHOKES 'EM, THAT'S ALL!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

MY CHEWIN' TOBACCER! I LEFT A PLUG OF IT ON THE SEAT OF THAT BLANKETY BLANK STAGECOACH! AND I HOPE IT CHOKES WHOEVER GITS IT!

the WESTERNER

THEY'RE GETTING AWAY! SHALL WE LIGHT OUT AFTER 'EM?

DON'T BOTHER! IT'S THE GOLD WE'RE AFTER! BESIDES THEY SHOOT TOO STRAIGHT! WE LOST ONE MAN... AND ANOTHER WAS WOUNDED DURING THAT GUNFIGHT!

HERE'S THE GOLD, JOHNNY! PLENTY OF IT TOO JUDGING FROM THE WEIGHT OF THIS BOX!

PUT IT IN A CARRYING SLING BETWEEN TWO HORSES! WE'LL TAKE IT STRAIGHT TO EARL MORELL!

LATER...

THERE IT IS MORELL! COST US GEORGE BRANN TO GET IT! AND SLARRY'S GOT A BULLET IN HIS SHOULDER!

TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS IN GOLD DUST! IT WAS BEING SHIPPED FROM SAN LALANDO!

YOU DID A GOOD JOB, JOHNNY TRIGGER! HERE'S YOUR *DINERO*! THERE'LL BE LESS WAYS TO SPLIT NOW THAT BRANN'S DEAD!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS, MR. MORELL! YOU ALWAYS PAY IN YOUR OWN MONEY FOR THE GOLD WE STEAL! WHY NOT JUST DIVVY UP THE GOLD?

BECAUSE I NEED IT, JOHNNY! I'M PLAYING FOR BIGGER STAKES THAN YOU REALIZE! JUST LEAVE EVERYTHING TO ME...AND *DON'T* ASK QUESTIONS!

BY THE WAY, DID YOU TALK TO ESTRELLITA LOPEZ? DID SHE PERSUADE HER FATHER TO SELL HIS LAND TO ME?

SHE TRIED, BOSS! ESTRELLITA WOULD DO ANYTHING FOR ME! BUT HER FATHER IS A STUBBORN ONE! HE SAID HIS FATHER, AND HIS GRANDFATHER WERE BURIED ON HIS LAND... AND HE WILL BE TOO!

MAYBE HE IS MORE RIGHT THAN HE KNOWS! YOU TAKE ESTRELLITA OUT TODAY, EH JOHNNY? MAKE SURE THAT SHE STAYS FAR AWAY FROM THE LOPEZ RANCHO!

OKAY, BOSS!

the WESTERNER

LATER, AT THE RANCH OWNED BY ANGEL LOPEZ...

WELCOME, MIS AMIGOS! I HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOU SINCE YESTERDAY! DID YOU HAVE A GOOD TRIP?

WE RAN INTO A LITTLE EXCITEMENT!

THE STAGECOACH WAS HELD UP AND ROBBED BY BANDIDOS! THE DRIVER WAS KILLED! WE JUST CAME BACK FROM REPORTING TO THE SHERIFF!

QUE MAL FORTUNA! BUT YOU WERE LUCKY TO ESCAPE WITH YOUR LIVES!

NOW, MI QUERIDO AMIGO, YOU KNOW WHY I'VE ASKED YOU TO COME TO THIS COUNTRY! YOURS IS NOT THE FIRST SUCH CASE! IN RECENT MONTHS EVERY STAGE CARRYING GOLD DUST HAS BEEN ROBBED!

YOU THINK IT'S AN ORGANIZED BAND OF ROBBERS?

I WOULD STAKE MY LIFE ON IT! AND I KNOW THAT A MAN NAMED EARL MORELL IS THE CHIEF OF THEM! BUT I CANNOT PROVE IT! HE HAS NOT EVEN ATTEMPTED TO SELL ANY OF THE STOLEN GOLD!

HMM! HE'S THE SAME FELLOW WHO'S BEEN TRYING TO BUY YOUR RANCHO! I WONDER IF THERE'S ANY CONNECTION!

HOLA!... HOLA!

WHO'S THAT? HE SOUNDS EXCITED, WHOEVER HE IS!

MASKED RIDERS! THEY ARE ATTACKING THE RIVER DAM!

MADRE MIA! IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO THE DAM, MY LANDS WILL BE FLOODED!

TAKE YOUR FAMILY AND RIDE FOR THE HILLS! WE'LL TRY OUR BEST TO STOP THEM! BUT THERE'S A CHANCE WE'LL BE TOO LATE!

SI! SI! I DO WHAT YOU SAY!

MEANWHILE, AT THE RIVER DAM...

OHHH!

THEY SHOT RAMON!

BANG!

BANG!!

the WESTERNER

NOW ONLY I AM LEFT TO DEFEND THE DAM! HERE THEY COME!

RIDE HIM DOWN!

MY GUN IS EMPTY! SPARE MY LIFE, SENOR!

YOU CAUSED ME LOTS OF TROUBLE, FRIEND!

BUT YOU WON'T CAUSE ANYMORE! ADIOS!

BANG!

ARGHHH!

HURRY UP! GET THAT DYNAMITE READY! I HAVE TO KEEP A DATE WITH A VERY PRETTY SENORITA... AND I CANNOT KEEP HER WAITING!

HA-HA!

OKAY, JOHNNY! IT'S READY TO... ULP!

A SHOT!

CRACK!

TAKE COVER!

BANG!

BAM!

BANG!

UHHH!

DIABLOS! I KNOW THESE HOMBRES! THEY ARE THE ONES FROM THE STAGE-COACH!

W-H-I-Z

BAM!

the WESTERNER

THEIR GUNS SHOOT LIKE THEY HAVE *EYES!* IT WILL COST US MANY MEN TO STAY HERE!

WE MUST GO! BUT FIRST I ATTEND TO ONE LITTLE MATTER!

BANG!

BOOM

THEY SET OFF THE DAM, BILL!

THE DIRTY, MURDERING COWARDS! I'LL *GET THEM* FOR THIS!

NOTHING MORE WE CAN DO HERE, NUGGETS! BUT THERE MAY BE PEOPLE TRAPPED DOWN IN THE VALLEY! *LET'S RIDE!*

SUFFERIN' DOGWOOD! LOOK AT THAT POOR FELLER! HE'S A GONER!

MAYBE NOT!

I HIT HIM!

CONSARN ME, BILL, IF YOU DON'T HANDLE THAT OLD ROPE ALMOST AS GOOD AS YOU HANDLE A GUN!

HE COULDN'T SWIM IN THAT FLOOD! BUT I SURE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO *PULL* HIM THROUGH IT!

the WESTERNER

WHY, IT'S ANGEL LOPEZ!

POR LOS SANTOS, THIS TIME I AM VERY CLOSE TO BEING ONE REAL ANGEL! YOU SAVE MY LIFE!

YOU HAD PLENTY OF WARNING, AMIGO! WHY DIDN'T YOU CLEAR OUT IN TIME?

I WENT BACK TO FIND MY DAUGHTER, ESTRELLITA! I THOUGHT SHE WAS SOMEWHERE IN THE RANCHO! BUT I DID NOT FIND HER! AND THEN... WHOOSH!

MY HOUSE IS SWEPT AWAY! MY RANCHO IS RUINED! BUT ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT IS MY LITTLE NINA! I HOPE AND PRAY SHE IS ALL RIGHT!

DON'T WORRY, AMIGO! SHE PROBABLY WASN'T ANYWHERE NEAR THE FLOOD!

AT THIS MOMENT, IN THE EL PARAISO CAFE...

YOU ARE VERY LATE, JOHNNEE! ESTRELLITA DOES NOT LIKE TO BE KEPT WAITING!

A THOUSANDS PARDONS, LITTLE DOVE! I WAS UNAVOIDABLY DETAINED... ON A MOST URGENT BUSINESS MATTER!

BUT THE MOMENT I WAS FREE, I FLEW TO YOUR SIDE! YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF MY LIFE, ESTRELLITA!

OH, JOHNNEE! YOU SAY SUCH PRETTY THINGS! I CANNOT BE ANGRY WITH YOU FOR LONG!

ESTRELLITA!

PAPA!

I LOOKED EVERYWHERE FOR YOU! BUT I DID NOT EXPECT TO FIND YOU HERE ---WITH THIS ANIMAL!

CAREFUL, LOPEZ! I AM NOT A MAN WHO TAKES KINDLY TO INSULTS!

the WESTERNER

(SOB) IT WAS MURDER! EVERYONE KNOWS YOU ARE THE QUICKEST SHOT IN THIS WHOLE COUNTRY!
AND THE STRAIGHTEST! YES, IT IS TRUE WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT JOHNNY TRIGGER! I AM ONE MUY TERRIFICO HOMBRE!

LATER, IN EARL MORELL'S OFFICE...
THAT WAS A CRUDE PIECE OF WORK, JOHNNY! I HAD A LOT OF TROUBLE CLEARING THINGS WITH THE POLICE!
I WASN'T WORRIED, BOSS. BESIDES, ANGEL LOPEZ IS DEAD! THEY ARE SELLING HIS RANCHO AT FORCED AUCTION! THAT IS THE IMPORTANT THING, EH?

the WESTERNER

YOU'RE RIGHT, JOHNNY! THE FLOOD WATERS RUINED IT FOR FARMING, OR GRAZING LAND! BUT IT'S STILL PERFECT FOR MY PURPOSES! ONCE I OWN THE LOPEZ LAND, I'LL BE READY TO MAKE MY MOVE!

HIS LAND IS THE SITE OF THE FAMOUS EL DORADO GOLD MINE! ONCE IT WAS THE RICHEST MINE IN THE STATE! THEN IT PLAYED OUT, AND SINCE THEN NO ONE HAS FOUND GOLD IN THIS REGION!

THERE IS NO GOLD, BOSS! EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT!

THEY'RE GOING TO *FIND GOLD*, JOHNNY! RIGHT IN THE ABANDONED EL DORADO MINE! BECAUSE WE'RE GOING TO SALT IT WITH THAT STOLEN GOLD DUST! WHEN THE GOLD RUSH STARTS, WE'LL SELL THE LAND I'VE BOUGHT AROUND HERE AT PRICES THAT WILL KNOCK YOUR EYES OUT!

BOSS, YOU ARE ONE VERY SMART FELLOW! WE'LL MAKE ENOUGH MONEY TO START OUR OWN PRIVATE MINT!

SEVERAL DAYS LATER, AT THE LOPEZ RANCHO AUCTION....

DON'T CRY ESTRELLITA! I KNOW IT'S HARD TO LOSE YOUR HOME, ESPECIALLY SO SOON AFTER YOU'VE LOST YOUR FATHER! BUT THE RANCHO ISN'T WORTH ANYTHING ANYMORE!

IT WOULD TAKE A LOT OF HARD WORK TO GET IT BACK ON A PAYING BASIS! YOU COULDN'T HANDLE IT ALONE!

THE LOPEZ FAMILY HAS LIVED HERE FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS! SOMEHOW, I CANNOT HELP FEELING IT IS MY FAULT, ALL THAT HAS HAPPENED!

ONE THING I KNOW, ESTRELLITA! THE FLOODING OF YOUR FATHER'S RANCHO IS PART OF A DELIBERATE PLAN! I'VE BEEN SCOUTING AROUND A LITTLE, AND I'M CONVINCED THAT EARL MORELL IS THE BRAINS BEHIND SOME GIGANTIC LAND SWINDLE!

YOUR FORMER BOY FRIEND, JOHNNY TRIGGER, IS WORKING FOR MORELL! YOU COULD HELP ME GET THE EVIDENCE I NEED TO PUT THEM BOTH IN JAIL!

JOHNNY KILLED MY FATHER! I WILL DO *ANYTHING* TO PUNISH HIM!

the WESTERNER

AFTER WILD BILL PECOS OUTLINES HIS PLAN....

IF Y'ASK ME, THERE'S ONLY ONE FAULT WITH THE WHOLE BUSINESS! A *WOMAN'S* MIXED UP IN IT.... AND Y'CAN'T TRUST A WOMAN ANY FURTHER THAN ANY OTHER KIND OF POISONOUS REPTILE!

YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT ESTRELLITA! SHE'S GROWN UP A LOT IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS! WE CAN COUNT ON HER TO DO HER PART!

BTUH!

THE AUCTION'S OVER! ONE OF MORELL'S STOOGES BOUGHT UP THE RANCHO! WE MIGHT AS WELL MOVE ALONG!

TWO DAYS LATER, THE SLEEPY TOWN ERUPTS WITH MAD EXCITEMENT! ONE MAGIC WORD SOUNDS IN THE STREETS...

GOLD!

GOLD! DID HE SAY GOLD?!

ANOTHER STRIKE! RICHER THAN EVER, THEY SAY!

WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?! LET'S START BUYING UP LAND BEFORE THE RUSH STARTS!

WESTERN BUGLE

Gold Found In El Dorado

A VERY PLEASING SIGHT, LITTLE DOVE! THE POOR FOOLS FIGHT FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF BUYING LAND AT TWENTY TIMES ITS REAL VALUE! I TELL YOU, EARL MORELL IS ONE VERY CLEVER HOMBRE!

I THINK HE'S SILLY!

MORELL'S LAND BUYING OFFIC

MR MORELL OWNS MOST OF THE LAND... AND HE KNOWS THERE IS PLENTY OF GOLD ON IT! WHY SHOULD HE SELL IT AT ANY PRICE?!

HA! HA! SOME OF THESE HOMBRES ARE GOING TO BE SURPRISED, MY LITTLE CHICA! I COULD TELL YOU SECRETS THAT WOULD SURPRISE YOUR EMPTY LITTLE HEAD!

IF YOU KNOW SO MUCH, I CAN'T SEE WHY YOU WON'T TRUST ME! AFTER ALL, I CAME BACK TO YOU AFTER YOU SHOT MY OWN FATHER! THAT SHOULD PROVE HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU!

WOMEN HAVE WAGGING TONGUES! IT IS BETTER IF YOU DO NOT KNOW ENOUGH TO TALK ABOUT... VAYA, CABALLO!

LATER, IN THE EL PARAISO CAFE...

DIGGETY-DOG! I AIN'T HAD SO MUCH FUN SINCE I WAS WHELPED! *YAHOOO!*

CLOMP! CLOMP! CLOMP!

the WESTERNER

PARDON ME, SENOR NUGGETS! CAN I SPEAK TO YOU ALONE?

HUH? CONSARN IT, A MAN CAN'T *EVER* HAVE ANY FUN!

WILL YOU SEE THAT WILD BILL PECOS GETS THIS NOTE? TELL HIM THAT IT'S VERY URGENT! I HAVE FOUND THE PROOF HE WANTS!

BILL RODE OVER TO CHECK ON THE EL DORADO MINE! HE WON'T BE BACK FOR A WHILE!

BUT YOU CAN TRUST ME! WHAT'S THIS HERE PROOF YOU MENTIONED?

I GOT THE COMBINATION TO MORELL'S PRIVATE SAFE FROM JOHNNY TRIGGER'S POCKET! THERE I FOUND SOME DOCUMENTS THAT SHOW THERE ISN'T ANY GOLD IN THE EL DORADO MINE...OR ANYWHERE ELSE IN THIS STATE!

MORELL'S BEEN SALTING THE MINE WITH GOLD DUST STOLEN FROM THE STAGE-COACHES BY JOHNNY TRIGGER AND HIS MEN!

DINGBUST IT, GAL, IF YOU DON'T ALMOST MAKE ME CHANGE MY MIND ABOUT WOMEN! BUT YOU SHOULD'VE TAKEN THE PAPERS WITH YOU! IF MORELL GETS THE WIND UP, HE'S LIABLE TO DESTROY 'EM!

YOU AND ME CAN HANDLE THIS! COME ON! WE'LL NEED THE COMBINATION TO THAT SAFE AGAIN!

FOUR TO THE RIGHT, Y' SAY...SEVEN LEFT... AND...

HURRY, PLEASE! I THINK I HEAR SOMEONE COMING!

DON'T TOUCH THAT SAFE, MISTER!

CLANG!

the WESTERNER

GO ON, GRAYBEARD! PULL THAT GUN! IT WILL GIVE ME THE GREATEST PLEASURE TO PUT A BULLET THROUGH YOUR HEART!

YOU MANGY COYOTE! YOU GOT THE DROP ON ME! START EVEN AND I'LL PROMISE TO PAY YOUR FUNERAL EXPENSES!

ENOUGH THREATS OF VIOLENCE! I DON'T WANT ANY CORPSES LITTERING MY OFFICE! IT MIGHT PROVE EMBARRASSING!

WELL, THE WHOLE COYOTE PACK IS GATHERING! YOU'RE EARL MORELL!

OF COURSE, I *COULD* KILL YOU! THERE'S A LAW AGAINST BREAKING INTO A MAN'S OFFICE AND LOOTING THE CONTENTS OF HIS SAFE!

I'D BE A MITE SURPRISED IF THERE AINT A LAW AGAINST STEALING GOLD DUST, AND USING IT TO SALT A MINE SO POOR FOLKS WOULD PAY THEIR LIFE SAVINGS FOR A PARCEL OF WORTHLESS LAND!

SO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT! THEN I'M AFRAID YOU KNOW ENTIRELY *TOO MUCH!* TAKE CARE OF HIM, JOHNNY!

IT'S A *PLEASURE*, BOSS!

KONK

MMMMF!

WE CAN'T AFFORD TO BE INVOLVED IN MURDER... NOT AT THIS STAGE! BUT I CAN RELY UPON YOUR INGENUITY, JOHNNY! IT WILL LOOK LIKE AN ACCIDENT, EH?

NOT EVEN THE BUZZARDS WILL KNOW WHAT HAPPENED, BOSS!

GOOD HUNTING, AMIGOS! *HASTA LA VISTA!*

the WESTERNER

MEANWHILE, IN THE EL DORADO MINE...

THIS GOLD WASN'T MINED HERE! IT'S PLACER'S GOLD. MINED IN STREAMS AND BROUGHT HERE TO SALT THE DIRT YIELD!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I GAVE ORDERS THAT NO STRANGERS ARE ALLOWED IN THE MINES! YOU'D BETTER TALK QUICK! I'VE GOT A MIGHTY NERVOUS TRIGGER FINGER!

I RECKON YOU'VE GOT ME DEAD TO RIGHTS! I WAS JUST...

...TAKING A LONG CHANCE! AND IT PAID OFF!

WHA..?

BAM

KLUNK!

I'VE GOT NO TIME TO WASTE ON YOU! EARL MORELL'S THE MAN I'M AFTER!

CRACK!

I SAVVY WHAT MORELL'S BEEN DOING NOW! HE WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT!

EL DORADO

NO! HELP!

WHOAAA! THAT'S ESTRELLITA'S VOICE!

GO AHEAD AND JUMP! IT'LL BE OVER QUICKER THAT WAY!

I AIN'T GONNA WALK OVER NO CLIFF TO SATISFY A COUPLA ORNERY OWLSHOOTERS! YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO SHOOT ME!

the WESTERNER

I DON'T THINK SO, AMIGO! THIS IS A BETTER WAY!

HEY! KEEP THAT DADBLASTED CAYUSE AWAY FROM ME!

EEEEYOWW!

WILD BILL!

LOOK OUT!

POW!

BAM! BAM!

JOHNEE KILLED HIM! I SAW HIM DRAW HIS GUN! EVERYONE KNOWS HE IS THE QUICKEST SHOT IN THE WHOLE COUNTRY!

MEBBE HE **WAS**, SENORITA! BUT WILD BILL PECOS LOOKS LIKE THE NEW CHAMPION TO ME!

SOON... I'D BETTER GET RID OF THESE RECORDS! THEY NEARLY CAUSED ME A LOT OF TROUBLE AND I WON'T NEED THEM ANY MORE!

BUT I WILL!

the WESTERNER

THEY'RE GOING TO BE EXHIBIT A IN THE CASE OF THE STATE VERSUS EARL MORELL! THE CHARGE IS SWINDLING, ROBBERY AND MURDER! AND I RECKON YOU KNOW WHAT THE VERDICT IS GOING TO BE!
AND LATER...
THEY JEST GOT THROUGH HANGING MORELL OVER AT THE JAILHOUSE! RECKON WE'D BETTER BE SADDLIN' UP AN' MOVIN' ON AGAIN, BILL!
NOT THIS TIME, NUGGETS! WE'RE STAYING ON FOR A SPELL!
SOMEBODY'S GOT TO HELP ESTRELLITA GET HER FATHER'S RANCH IN WORKING ORDER AGAIN! IT MAY BE A FEW MONTHS BEFORE WE HIT THE TRAIL!
DINGBUST IT! I WAS RIGHT THE FUST TIME! WOMEN IS THE ORNERIEST CRITTERS I EVER DID SEE!
THE END

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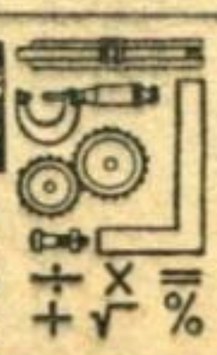

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the WESTERNER

The MAGIC WAR BONNET

Among THE SIOUX, THE FIERCE FIGHTERS OF THE PLAINS, THERE IS A LEGEND CONCERNING ONE OF THEIR GREAT CHIEFS, WHO WAS CALLED ROMAN NOSE...

WE WILL HAVE A GREAT BATTLE BEFORE THE DAY IS OVER, ROMAN NOSE! ARE YOU NOT GLAD?

I AM ALWAYS GLAD TO DO BATTLE. BUT EVEN NOW, THE MEDICINE MAN PREPARES POWERFUL MEDICINE FOR ME! A MAGIC WAR BONNET...WHICH WILL PROTECT ME IN FIGHT, ALWAYS!

AND THE FAMED MEDICINE MAN OF THE SIOUX...THE FABULOUS SITTING BULL, HIMSELF, PLACES THE WAR BONNET ON THE HEAD OF ROMAN NOSE...

WITH THIS BONNET YOU WILL BE SAFE ALWAYS, EVEN IN THE THICK OF BATTLE, FOR NO ONE WILL EVER BE ABLE TO HARM YOU. IT IS A MAGIC BONNET MADE WITH STRONG MEDICINE. ONLY ONE TABOO CAN BREAK THE CHARM!

WHAT IS THAT, SITTING BULL?

IF YOU EVER TOUCH METAL BEFORE YOU GO INTO BATTLE, THEN THE MAGIC IS BROKEN ...AND YOU WILL DIE IN THE NEXT FIGHT!

IN THE NEXT MONTHS, ROMAN NOSE, WEARING HIS MAGIC WAR BONNET, WAS THE MOST DARING FIGHTER OF THE SIOUX...AND AS IF BY SOME UNKNOWN POWER, HE WAS UNSCATHED IN BATTLE AFTER BATTLE...

CONSARN THAT INJUN CHIEF... WE CAN'T SEEM TO TOUCH HIM!

GOT HIM PLUMB IN MY SIGHTS, AND STILL I CAN'T GET HIM!

BAM!

BAM!

BLAM!

CRACK!

AND AS THE RELENTLESS WAR BETWEEN THE SOLDIERS AND THE SIOUX CONTINUED, A PARTY OF SIOUX WARRIORS PAUSED AT AN INDIAN VILLAGE...

THE PONY SOLDIERS HAVE FLED!

HERE, ROMAN NOSE, DRINK. THIS TIN CUP IS FROM A FALLEN PONY SOLDIER!

GOOD! I HAVE A GREAT THIRST. NOW THAT THE SOLDIERS HAVE GONE, WE CAN CELEBRATE!

SUDDENLY...

BROTHERS! THE PONY SOLDIERS ARE ATTACKING! COME QUICKLY!

I HAVE TOUCHED METAL, BEFORE A BATTLE. I HAVE BROKEN THE MEDICINE!

AND IN THE BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED, ROMAN NOSE WAS KILLED IN THE FIRST CLASH WITH THE TROOPS. IT APPEARED THAT THE MAGIC SPELL HAD BEEN BROKEN... TODAY, THE OLDER SIOUX WARRIORS STILL TALK ABOUT ROMAN NOSE, AND HOW HE BROKE THE TABOO OF THE MAGIC WAR BONNET!

BAM!

the WESTERNER

the MASSACRE of FORT SILVER CREEK

A TRUE STORY!
FASTER, FASTER, SAM! THE INDIANS ARE GAINING GROUND!
HEAVEN HELP US IF THEY CATCH UP WITH US!
MORT LAWRENCE
DICK BURDICK
Ruthless!... THAT WAS THE WORD FOR JIM LARSON, HEAD OF THE SILVER SYNDICATE AT SILVER CREEK! A MAN WHO USED ALL THE WEALTH AND RESOURCES AT HIS COMMAND IN ORDER TO CREATE AN EMPIRE IN THE RICH AND UNDEVELOPED SOUTHWEST TERRITORY... UPON WHICH HE WOULD REIGN AS AN ABSOLUTE DICTATOR... SO POWERFUL THAT HE COULD CONTROL THE DESTINIES OF THE COURAGEOUS PIONEERS WHO SETTLED WITHIN HIS DOMAIN. HE STOPPED AT NOTHING TO ACHIEVE HIS AMBITION... NOTHING... NOT EVEN MURDER!

ALONG THE VAST ROCKY PLAINS OF THE SOUTHWEST TERRITORY TRAVELS A SUPPLY TRAIN LOADED WITH FOOD AND PRECIOUS AMMUNITION FOR THE U.S. ARMY TROOPS STATIONED AT FORT SILVER CREEK... SINCE THERE IS A CONSTANT DANGER OF ATTACK BY INDIANS, THE WAGON TRAIN IS ESCORTED BY A COMPANY OF TROOPS...

CAPTAIN... I'M SURE GLAD THAT YOU'RE HERE, ELSE OLD CHIEF WOLF FANG AND HIS APACHES, WOULD'VE HAD OUR SCALPS BY NOW!
CAN'T SAY THAT I AGREE WITH YOU... SEEMS TO BE A MOST UNEVENTFUL TRIP!

the WESTERNER

AT THAT VERY MOMENT...

SOLDIERS LEAVE VERY SOON...THEN WE ATTACK!

WE MUST DRIVE THE WHITE MAN FROM OUR LAND!

BACK AT THE SUPPLY TRAIN, A MESSENGER ARRIVES FROM ARMY HEADQUARTERS...

CAPTAIN, I HAVE A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL CLAY, SIR!

THANKS SERGEANT!

HMM...OFFICIAL ORDER! LEAVE THE WAGON TRAIN IMMEDIATELY AND PROCEED AT ONCE TO FORT HALE... SIGNED GENERAL CLAY!

WHAT?! IT CAN'T BE...CAPTAIN! YOU CAN'T LEAVE US HERE ALONE...THEM INJUNS ARE IN THOSE HILLS JUST WAITING FOR YOU TO LEAVE!

I'M SORRY, BUT I MUST CARRY OUT GENERAL CLAY'S ORDER!

THAT'S NO ORDER! THAT'S OUR DEATH WARRANT!

THERE THEY GO, SAM! LEAVING US AT THE MERCY OF THEM INJUNS!

MIGHT AS WELL GET MOVING... MAYBE WE'LL MAKE IT!

A FEW DAYS LATER AT FORT SILVER CREEK, THE WAGON TRAIN IS SIGHTED...

THERE SHE IS...THE WAGON TRAIN! THEY MADE IT! YAHOO!

OPEN THE GATES! NOW WE'LL HAVE PLENTY OF FOOD AND AMMUNITION IN CASE THE INDIANS START ACTING UP!

SUDDENLY...

WHAT THE...INJUNS!

AIEEE!...DEATH TO WHITE MAN!

IN A MATTER OF MINUTES, EVERY INHABITANT WAS RUTHLESSLY SLAUGHTERED BY THE APACHES AND FORT SILVER CREEK WAS BURNED TO THE GROUND.

NOW INDIAN FREE TO LIVE IN PEACE ONCE AGAIN!

the WESTERNER

BUT CHIEF WOLF FANG WAS WRONG! LESS THAN TWO MONTHS AFTER THE MASSACRE, THE U.S. ARMY MET THE APACHES ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE. WOLF FANG AND A HANDFUL OF HIS TRIBE MANAGED TO ESCAPE AND THE RESERVATION WAS THROWN OPEN FOR SETTLEMENT!

A FEW MONTHS LATER AT AN ARMY COURT-MARTIAL...

NOW TELL THE COURT ONCE AGAIN, CAPTAIN, ARE YOU ABSOLUTELY *CERTAIN* THAT THE ORDER TO ABANDON THE WAGON TRAIN WAS GIVEN BY GENERAL CLAY?

YES, SIR, I'M *POSITIVE!*

THAT IS ALL, CAPTAIN! I NOW CALL GENERAL CLAY TO THE WITNESS STAND!

GENERAL CLAY, ISN'T IT TRUE THAT YOU'RE INVOLVED WITH THE SYNDICATE THAT STAKED CLAIMS FOR THE VALUABLE SILVER DEPOSITS, IN ADVANCE, AROUND FORT SILVER CREEK?

WHY...I...I..

ISN'T IT ALSO TRUE, GENERAL, THAT YOU *WANTED* THE INDIANS TO WIPE OUT THE WAGON TRAIN... YOU *WANTED* THE APACHES TO DESTROY FORT SILVER CREEK... *YOU KNEW* THAT THESE INCIDENTS WOULD FORCE THE GOVERNMENT TO *THROW OPEN* THE INDIAN TERRITORY FOR SETTLEMENT! AND THEN THE SILVER SYNDICATE COULD *TAKE OVER* THE LAND!

NO!...*NO!* I DID *NOT* SEND THAT MESSAGE... I AM *NOT* CONNECTED WITH ANY SYNDICATE...I-I..*UHHH!*

H-HOW IS HE, DOCTOR?

GENERAL CLAY IS *DEAD*...OF A HEART ATTACK!

Within SIX MONTHS AFTER THE MASSACRE, A THRIVING COMMUNITY SPRANG UP NEAR THE RUINS OF THE FORT. HOWEVER, THE RICH AND POWERFUL SYNDICATE OBTAINED A STRANGLE-HOLD ON ALL THE RESOURCES IN THE TOWN, WHICH WAS NOW CALLED SILVER CREEK!

IN THE OFFICE OF JIM LARSON, THE DICTATOR OF THE SYNDICATE...

WELL BOYS, THE FORT SILVER CREEK CASE IS CLOSED! THE GENERAL WAS FOUND GUILTY OF CONSPIRING WITH CHIEF WOLF FANG AND THE GENERAL'S TIMELY DEATH LEAVES US IN THE CLEAR!

MR. LARSON, YOUR IDEA OF ME HANDING THAT PHONEY MESSAGE TO THE CAPTAIN, SURE DID THE TRICK!

the WESTERNER

CAPTAIN, WE COULDN'T HAVE ENGINEERED THE PLOT WITHOUT YOUR HELP. NOW THAT YOU'VE RESIGNED YOUR COMMISSION, YOU HAVE A STEADY JOB WITH THE SYNDICATE!

W-WHAT?... OH, SURE... BUT I C-CAN'T FORGET THE SLAUGHTER! IT'S D-DRIVING ME MAD! IT WAS MY FAULT... MY FAULT...

CAPTAIN... WHAT YOU NEED IS A FEW DRINKS!

Y-YES... A FEW DRINKS. THAT SHOULD DO IT.... ALL THOSE M-MEN KILLED... MY FAULT...

MR. LARSON, WE'VE GOTTA DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE CAPTAIN! HE'S A NERVOUS WRECK! HE'S LIABLE TO SPILL THE WHOLE STORY!

YES, CAIN! IT'LL HAVE TO BE A NICE QUIET KILLING, SO THAT IT DOESN'T AROUSE THE INTEREST OF THE ARMY! I'LL LEAVE IT TO YOU!

THE NEXT DAY, A TALL, RAW-BONED STRANGER IS SEEN SLOWLY RIDING INTO SILVER CREEK...

WELL, SILVER CREEK AT LAST! THIS IS MY *LAST* HOPE! I'VE *GOT* TO FIND HIM HERE, OR I'LL HAVE TO CALL IT QUITS!

HOWDY, MA'AM... WHAT'S GOOD ON THE MENU TODAY?

WE HAVE THE BEST BEEF STEW IN THE TERRITORY! STRANGER YOU LOOK AS IF YOU'VE BEEN ON THE TRAIL A LONG TIME!

YES... BUT MAYBE YOU CAN HELP ME! DO YOU KNOW A CAPTAIN STALEY?

YES, I KNOW HIM... POOR MAN! HE'S ALWAYS DRINKING AT THE SILVER SALOON!

HE'S *HERE!* AFTER ALL THESE WEARY MONTHS OF SEARCHING...

THANKS A LOT, MA'AM!

B-BUT WHAT ABOUT YOUR BEEF STEW, STRANGER?

IN THE SILVER SALOON...

SAY, BARTENDER, WHERE CAN I FIND THE CAPTAIN?

HE'S ONE OF THE HANDS IN THAT POKER GAME OVER IN THE CORNER, STRANGER!

the WESTERNER

MY HAND'S WORTH 20 DOLLARS!

PARTNER...I'M FORCED TO RAISE YOU FIFTY!

T-THAT'S 70 DOLLARS TO ME AND I'LL R-RAISE FIFTY DOLLARS M-MORE!

THAT'S TOO STEEP FOR ME!

I'LL CALL YOUR WAGER CAPTAIN...I'VE GOT THREE ACES!

S-SORRY CAIN... I'M HOLDING F-FOUR LADIES!

CAPTAIN, IF YOU'VE GOT ONE OF MY-ACES HIDDEN IN YOUR BREAST-POCKET, YOU'D BETTER COME UP SHOOTIN'!

W-WHY...WHY.. -HOW DID THIS..?

NOT SO FAST, MISTER!

BANG!

OWWW...

STRANGER, WHY DON'T YOU MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

I SAW YOU *PLANT* THAT CARD ON THE CAPTAIN, MISTER! AND I DON'T AIM TO STAND AROUND AND WATCH AN INNOCENT MAN SHOT! C'MON CAPTAIN, LET'S HAVE A DRINK!

STRANGER, IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR YOU, I-I'D BE D-DEAD NOW!

CAPTAIN, SEEMS AS THOUGH SOME PEOPLE WANT TO GET RID OF YOU, HOW COME?

I-I...I'M SORRY, I HAVE TO GO, NOW!

HOLD ON, CAPTAIN... I WANT TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS!

MR. LARSON WANT TO SEE YOU IN HIS OFFICE, SENOR!

HMM:... LARSON'S THE HEAD OF THE SILVER SYNDICATE... WHY WOULD HE WANT TO SEE ME? MAYBE HE SUSPECTS WHO I AM....

OKAY... RECKON I'LL SEE MR. LARSON. LEAD ON, I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU!

the WESTERNER

IN LARSON'S OFFICE...

THE BOYS TELL ME YOU'RE LIGHTENING FAST ON THE DRAW! I CAN USE A MAN THAT'S HANDY WITH A GUN! MY NAME'S LARSON, STRANGER, WHAT'S YOURS?

CLINT BARKER'S THE NAME!

I'M SURE YOU ARE AWARE THAT MY HOLDINGS IN SILVER CREEK ARE EXTENSIVE! NATURALLY A MAN THAT'S IMPORTANT AS I AM IS APT TO HAVE A FEW ENEMIES! BARKER... WOULD YOU CONSIDER ACTING AS MY BODYGUARD FOR... $150 A WEEK?

YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A BODYGUARD, LARSON!

THE NEXT DAY...

I'VE GOT BAD NEWS, BOSS! REMEMBER THE BAG OF GOLD DUST YOU SENT CHIEF WOLF FANG AS PAYMENT FOR THE MASSACRE? WELL, HE SENT IT *BACK!* WITH AN *ARROW* THROUGH IT!

SO THE CHIEF IS AFTER MY SCALP, EH? ...WELL I'LL TEND TO THAT LATER! MY MAIN WORRY IS THE CAPTAIN. TOO BAD BARKER INTERFERED YESTERDAY, BUT..... COME IN!

Y-YOU TRIED TO KILL ME YESTERDAY...WHY? I CARRIED OUT MY SHARE OF THE BARGAIN! PLEASE L-LET ME L-LEAVE TOWN... I'LL NEVER TELL, N-NEVER...

YOU HAD A BAD DREAM, CAPTAIN... NO ONE TRIED TO KILL YOU! SURE YOU CAN LEAVE TOWN. I'LL RESERVE A SEAT FOR YOU ON THE NINE O'CLOCK COACH. HOW'S THAT?

WHEN CAPTAIN STALEY LEAVES...

OKAY, JOSE, I'M ASSIGNING YOU THE JOB FOR TONIGHT! YOU'D BETTER USE THAT KNIFE! IT WON'T MAKE MUCH NOISE!

OKAY, BOSS! KNIFE SO SHARP, CAPTAIN NEVER EVEN FEEL IT!

AT THAT MOMENT, CLINT BARKER IS LOOKING OVER THE BATTERED RUINS OF WHAT WAS ONCE FORT SILVER CREEK...

WHY, HELLO MA'AM! WHY ARE YOU WAY OUT HERE ALL ALONE ...AND YOU'RE CRYING!

MY FATHER WAS A MASTER SERGEANT AT FORT SILVER CREEK! THESE AREN'T TEARS OF PITY, THEY'RE TEARS OF *HATE!* HATE FOR THAT *TRAITOR*, GENERAL CLAY! THE MAN WHO KILLED MY FATHER!

GENERAL CLAY?.. ER, UH... YES... I READ THE STORY IN THE NEWSPAPERS! BUT MA'AM ARE YOU SURE THE GENERAL SENT THAT FATAL MESSAGE?

I'M *CERTAIN* HE DID! THE COURT-MARTIAL FOUND HIM GUILTY, AND THEY SAID HE HAD SOME SHARES IN THE SILVER SYNDICATE!

the WESTERNER

THAT'S THE OPINION OF MOST OF THE TOWNFOLK! BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE IT MA'AM...S-SAY, I'M STARVED. LET'S RIDE BACK TO TOWN! I'M ITCHIN' FOR SOME OF YOUR FAMOUS BEEF STEW!

ONLY THIS TIME, I HOPE YOU STAY LONG ENOUGH TO EAT IT!

LATER THAT NIGHT, AT THE SILVER STAGECOACH OFFICE...

YOU HAVE A RESERVATION FOR ME, JIM?

SORRY, CAPTAIN... YOUR NAME AIN'T ON THE LIST!

SPAT

B-BUT...IT MUST BE! LARSON PROMISED TO RES....OH...NO...NO!

HELLO, CAPTAIN! GOIN' SOMEPLACE?

CAPTAIN STALEY, REALIZING THAT DEATH IS CLOSE AT HAND, PLUNGES HEADLONG THROUGH THE OFFICE WINDOW...

I M-MUST GET AWAY...

EVENIN' CAPTAIN...I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU....SAY, YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND!

BARKER...BARKER...THEY'RE AFTER ME! T-THEY WANT TO KILL ME...P-PLEASE SAVE ME!

CAPTAIN...I'LL MAKE A DEAL WITH YOU.... TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE FORT SILVER CREEK MASSACRE, AND I'LL SEE THAT YOU'RE PROTECTED!

YES...YES...ANYTHING, BARKER! JUST SAVE ME! G-GIVE ME A P-PENCIL AND PAPER...I-I'LL WRITE A COMPLETE CONFESSION!

THERE! THAT'S THE WHOLE STORY... AT LAST MY CONSCIENCE IS CLEAR. NOW I'LL BE ABLE TO SLEEP AGAIN... NOW MAYBE I'LL...OOOHHH!

HE'S BEEN STABBED!

WHAT THE...?

the WESTERNER

H-HOW IS HE, CLINT? SHALL I GET THE DOCTOR?

NO USE, BETTY. CAPTAIN STALEY IS DEAD!

NOW THAT I'VE GOT HIS CONFESSION, BETTY, I CAN TELL YOU WHO I REALLY AM! MY NAME IS CLINTON CLAY, THE SON OF GENERAL CLAY!

NO...NO, CLINT! IT CAN'T BE...NOT THE SON OF THAT TRAITOR, THE MAN WHO CAUSED THE DEATH OF MY FATHER! PLEASE, CLINT, SAY IT ISN'T SO!

YES, BETTY...IT'S TRUE! BUT HE'S NOT A TRAITOR! IT SAYS SO IN THIS CONFESSION!

GO AWAY...I NEVER WANT TO SEE YOU AGAIN...NEVER... NEVER!

MEANWHILE, BACK AT LARSON'S OFFICE...

I GOT THE CAPTAIN LIKE YOU SAID...BUT BEFORE I KILL HIM, HE WRITE CONFESSION AND GIVE IT TO BARKER, YOUR BODYGUARD!

WHAT?.....COME ON YOU STUPID FOOL. WE'VE GOT TO GET THAT CONFESSION IMMEDIATELY!

IF HE EVER HANDS IT TO THE ARMY, WE'LL ALL HANG!

THERE HE IS, MEN... GRAB HIM!

LARSON! I'D BETTER DIG SOME DIRT... FAST!

RESTAURANT

MY ONLY CHANCE TO CLEAR THE GENERAL'S NAME IS TO DELIVER THIS SCRAP OF PAPER TO THE ARMY, AT FORT HALE. BUT FROM THE LOOKS OF THAT DUST BEIN' KICKED UP BEHIND ME, I MAY RUN INTO A BIT OF TROUBLE...

MILE AFTER MILE THE SAVAGE CHASE CONTINUES. SLOWLY BUT SURELY, LARSON AND HIS MEN CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN THEM AND THEIR QUARRY...

C'MON, BLACKY.... DIG... DIG...

SO INTENT ARE THE PURSUED AND THE PURSUERS, THAT THEY FAIL TO NOTICE A LONE INDIAN ON HORSEBACK SILENTLY WATCHING THE PROCEEDINGS...

OKAY, MEN...LET HIM HAVE IT! AND SHOOT TO KILL!

I GOT HIS HORSE!

BANG!

MY ONLY CHANCE IS TO MAKE THE RUINS AT FORT SILVER CREEK! MAYBE I CAN STALL 'EM... OHHH... MY ARM!

BANG!

I WINGED HIM IN THE ARM! HE CAN'T GO FAR NOW!

HE MUST'VE HOLED UP IN THE RUINS!

ME FIND HIM, PRONTO!

SEVERAL MINUTES LATER, CLINT, RAPIDLY LOSING BLOOD, GRIMLY HANGS ON... SUDDENLY....

OKAY, COME AND GET IT.... THAT'S ONE FOR THE GENERAL... TWO TO GO...

BANG! BANG! BANG!

EEIIAGHHH!

CAIN MANAGES TO SNEAK UP BEHIND CLINT, AND...

START SAYIN' YOUR PRAYERS, BARKER! THIS IS IT!

OOHHHHH!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

TWO DOWN... NOW FOR THE BIG ONE...

the WESTERNER

TAKE IT EASY, BARKER... I COUNTED SIX SHOTS, AND THAT'S ALL YOUR GUN HOLDS. BEFORE I EXTERMINATE YOU, I'M CURIOUS TO KNOW WHY YOU WERE SO INTERESTED IN THAT CONFESSION?
AN INDIAN!...MIGHT BE A FRIEND...GOTTA STALL LARSON...
R-RECKON THAT CURIOSITY SOMETIMES KILLS A RAT, TOO, LARSON....I HAPPEN TO BE THE SON OF GENERAL CLAY, THE MAN YOU FRAMED FOR THE MASSACRE OF FORT SILVER CREEK... IS IT CLEAR ENOUGH?

AS JIM LARSON'S TRIGGER FINGER TIGHTENS...

T-THANKS A L-LOT... C-CHIEF...
AT LAST, CHIEF WOLF FANG GET REVENGE ON BLACK-HEARTED TRAITOR! HE PROMISE FREEDOM IF WE DESTROY FORT...INSTEAD MY PEOPLE DIE ON FIELD OF BATTLE AND ARE DRIVEN FROM THEIR LAND!

Clinton CLAY TURNED CAPTAIN STALEY'S CONFESSION OVER TO THE PROPER ARMY AUTHORITIES, AND GENERAL CLAY'S NAME WAS CLEARED OF A TERRIBLE WRONG! WITH THE DEATH OF JIM LARSON, THE SYNDICATE'S POWER WAS BROKEN AND ITS HOLDINGS WERE RIGHTFULLY DISTRIBUTED AMONG THE CITIZENS OF SILVER CREEK...

A FEW WEEKS LATER...

...TO SHOW THEIR GRATITUDE FOR YOUR PART IN DESTROYING THE SILVER SYNDICATE, THE PEOPLE UNANIMOUSLY ELECT YOU SHERIFF OF SILVER CREEK!
WELL, BETTY, NOW THAT I'LL BE HERE FOR QUITE A SPELL...UH...W-WOULD Y-YOU...ER, THAT IS...
MARRY YOU? OF COURSE, CLINT, DARLING. I'M SO GLAD YOU ASKED ME!
The End

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the WESTERNER

The Mystery of THE LOST DUTCHMAN MINE

A TRUE STORY!

SOMEWHERE IN THE BARREN STRETCHES OF ARIZONA'S RUGGED MOUNTAINS, THERE IS A TREASURE HIDDEN... A TREASURE THAT IS RICH BEYOND THE KEN OF MAN... BUT IT IS LOST, IN THE LIMBO OF TIME, SHROUDED BY THE SWIRLING MISTS OF LEGEND. MANY MEN HAVE SOUGHT THE TREASURE, AND MANY HAVE FAILED. THE BONES OF SOME ARE BLEACHING IN THE BLAZING SUN, WHILE OTHERS DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE... FOR THIS TREASURE IS GUARDED BY A CURSE AND ABOUT IT HAS GROWN THE LEGEND OF... "THE LOST DUTCHMAN MINE!"

NO WATER! NOTHIN' TO EAT... AND I'M LOST! IT'S THE CURSE OF THE LOST DUTCHMAN MINE! I'LL DIE HERE, IN THESE MOUNTAINS, LIKE ALL THE OTHERS!

SOON AFTER THE CIVIL WAR, TWO EX-CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS FOUND THEMSELVES IN A RUGGED BAR NOT FAR FROM THE MEXICAN BORDER IN ARIZONA...

HE'S A LITTLE NUTS! HE SITS AND STARES AT THE MAP! NEVER SAYS A WORD...

YAH, BUT HOW DO WE KNOW THIS GOLD MINE'S ANY GOOD?

THIS! DON'T THIS PROVE IT? IT'S LOADED WITH ORE I HAD IT APPRAISED AND IT COMES TO MORE THAN THIRTY DOLLARS A TON... I SWIPED IT FROM THE OLD MEXICAN!

DON'T WORRY, WALT! WE'LL GET THE MAP!

the WESTERNER

SOON, THE TWO MEN ARE AT THE CABIN OF THE OLD MEXICAN...

SEE, JAKE... THERE HE IS! JUST LIKE I SAID, RIGHT?

OKAY, WALT! LET'S GET IT OVER WITH! IT'S ALWAYS BETTER TO GET THESE THINGS DONE QUICKLY!

WHAT IS IT, SENORS? I AM AN OLD MAN, I HAVE NOTHING! GO AWAY AND LET ME STAY WITH MY MEMORIES!

YOU WON'T HAVE ANY MEMORIES, POP! JUST HAND OVER THAT MAP, AND KEEP QUIET! MAYBE WE WON'T DO ANYTHING TO YOU!

KILL HIM, WALT! PUT HIM OUT OF HIS MISERY... YOU'LL BE DOING HIM A FAVOR! HE'S A WALKIN' DEAD MAN, NOW!

NO! YOU SHALL NOT HAVE THE MAP! FOR THIS, I KILLED MY OWN BROTHER... FOR GOLD MAKES A MAN'S BRAIN TURN TO WATER... GREED FILLS THE HEART! I KILLED MY OWN BROTHER, AND...

YOU TOUCH ME, POP! STILL **WE** WANT THAT MAP... AN' THERE'S BEEN ENOUGH TALKING ABOUT IT!

GET THE MAP, WALT!

SURE THING! SO LONG, POP!

AAAA!

AND, AS THE KILLERS LEAVE, THE FLAMES FED BY THE KEROSENE, SPREAD LIKE WILDFIRE, TURNING THE FLIMSY HUT INTO A ROARING FURNACE...

YOU WILL NEVER KNOW A HAPPY DAY, WHILE THE MAP IS IN YOUR HANDS, MURDERERS! THE MAP WILL DESTROY YOU AS IT HAS ME! WHAT IS BOUGHT IN BLOOD HAS TO BE PAID IN BLOOD!!! **YOU... AAAHH!**

BUT THE OLD MAN'S DYING WORDS ARE ENGULFED IN THE SEA OF FLAME WHICH DEVOURS THE CABIN...

THERE GOES THE EVIDENCE, WALT! WE'RE IN THE CLEAR NOW!

IT'S ALL PRETTY CLEAR! WE FOLLOW THE MOUNTAIN TRAIL TO A PEAK CALLED EL SOMBRERO! AN' THERE'S THE MINE, LOCATED AT THE FOOT OF IT!

FOR DAYS, THE MEN PUSHED FORWARD INTO THE MOUNTAINS, THE WAY IS RUGGED, FOR THIS IS HARD, BARREN COUNTRY, WHERE THE JAGGED PEAKS, WITH THEIR SILENT MENACE, STAND LIKE GIANT BARRIERS...

LOOK, JAKE! THERE IT IS!

YAH! WE MADE IT! SOON, WE'LL BE PLAYING WITH GOLD DUST AND WE'LL NEVER KNOW ANOTHER HUNGRY DAY IN OUR LIVES!

the WESTERNER

BUT, WATCHING WITH KEEN EYES ARE BRAVES, RUTHLESS WARRIORS LED BY THE WILY CHIEF, COCHISE...

PALEFACE COME! THEY GO TO THE MOUNTAIN, EL SOMBRERO!

YES, THEY SEEK THE YELLOW DUST! YOU STAY HERE AND WATCH THEM! I SHALL RETURN TO COCHISE AND SEEK HIS COUNSEL!

AT THE INDIAN CAMP...

TWO PALEFACE, COCHISE! THEY HEAD TOWARD EL SOMBRERO!

THEY COME TO SEEK THE YELLOW DUST! FIRST WE WILL PLAY WITH THEM, LIKE THE CAT PLAYS WITH MOUSE, *THEN* WE KILL!

WE WILL LET THEM TAKE THE DUST FROM THE EARTH! THEN, WHEN THEY THINK THE WAY BACK IS SAFE, AND THEIR GOLD IS SECURE, WE WILL STRIKE THEM DOWN! THEN, OUR DEED WILL BE SWEETER TO OUR TASTE, FOR WE WILL KILL OUR ENEMIES IN THEIR MOMENT OF TRIUMPH!

ON AND ON THE TWO MEN TRAVEL, OVER TREACHEROUS TRAILS, AND ALMOST IMPASSABLE BOULDERS, UNTIL THEY REACH THEIR GOAL... EL SOMBRERO!

IT'S HERE! JAKE! JAKE! WE'RE RICH!

YAH, WALT! BUT THERE'S A LOT OF WORK TO DO FIRST!

LOOK, JAKE! I WANT YOU TO KNOW WE'RE IN FIFTY-FIFTY, SEE! I'VE BEEN CARRYING THE MAP ALL THE WAY AND TO SHOW YOU I TRUST YOU, HERE'S HALF OF IT!

PARDS, THAT'S US, WALT! JUST LIKE IN THE WAR WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER A LONG TIME, WALT! NOTHING'S GOING TO SEPARATE US NOW!

THEY WORKED HARD, BUT THE HARVEST WAS RICH...

HOW MUCH DO YOU THINK WE HAVE NOW, WALT?

IT'S MOUNTING FAST, JAKE! SOON WE CAN QUIT! THERE'LL BE MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS BETWEEN US! THAT'S ENOUGH FOR A WHILE!

BUT WHAT THE MEN DID NOT KNOW WAS THAT THEIR EVERY MOVE WAS FOLLOWED BY THE HAWK-EYED INDIANS...

the WESTERNER

THEY HAD NAMED THE MINE THE LOST DUTCHMAN, AND FINALLY...

EVERY TIME I THINK OF THAT ROAD BACK, I FEEL WEAK! IT SURE IS A LONG, TOUGH HAUL!

JAKE, IT'S GOING TO BE SMOOTH AS SILK FOR YOU--WHERE YOU'RE GOING!

JAKE...IT'S GOING TO BE FIFTY-FIFTY... I'M ALWAYS WILLING TO SHARE! THERE'S SIX BULLETS IN THIS IRON AND I'M GIVING YOU HALF OF 'EM!

WALT! YOU WOULDN'T DO NOTHING TO ME? I'M YOUR PARD, WALT!

YOU GET HALF OF MY BULLETS, HALF OF THE MAP! AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE THAT LONG HAUL BACK! SEE WHAT A GOOD PARD I AM?

WALT! NO! AAAHH!

GOODBYE, JAKE... THANKS FOR EVERYTHING! *HAW! HAW!* I'M LEAVING YOU HALF OF THE MAP, WALT! I KNOW THIS COUNTRY, I CAN FIND THE MINE WITHOUT A MAP! *HAW! HAW!*

SHALL WE KILL HIM, NOW, COCHISE?

NO! LET HIM THINK HE IS ESCAPING! THE PALEFACE IS BEYOND UNDERSTANDING! THIS IS THE SECOND TIME WE HAVE WATCHED SUCH TREACHERY! THE OTHER, THE MEXICAN, KILLED HIS OWN BROTHER! ALL FOR THE YELLOW METAL!

DOWN THE ROCKY TRAIL...

COME ON! JUST A LITTLE BIT... AND I'LL HAVE STEAKS, CIGARS, SILK SHIRTS, EVERYTHING! IF I NEED MONEY, I'LL COME BACK AND VISIT THE DUTCHMAN AND EL SOMBRERO!

THE PERILOUS DESCENT IS ENDED...

I MADE IT! *I MADE IT!* OH, YOU BURROS YOU FOUR-LEGGED BEAUTIES! YOU BROUGHT MY GOLD OUT OF THE MOUNTAINS!

BUT...

NOW, PALEFACE... YOU WILL DIE...

APACHES! BUT... HOW... DID???

the WESTERNER

KILL HIM!

NO, INJUN! I'LL GIVE YOU GOLD... DON'T... DON'T KILL ME!!! OHHHH!!

LIKE DEMONS, THE INDIANS SCATTER THE GOLD DUST TO THE WINDS... TO THEM THIS YELLOW DUST IS EVIL FOR THEY BELIEVE IT MAKES MEN MAD!

WE WILL NOT TAKE THE SCALP OF THIS ONE, FOR HE IS EVIL... AND HIS SCALP CAN BRING US ONLY BAD SPIRITS!

SOON THERE IS SILENCE ...WITH ONLY A FLICKERING SPARK OF LIFE LEFT...

HELP! HELP! DON'T LET ME DIE! MY GOLD! MY GOLD!! THE LOST DUTCHMAN!

A PARTY OF PROSPECTORS PASSES NEARBY...

HEY LOOK! IT'S GOLD DUST, BOYS!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WEAVER? NOBODY LEAVES A SACK OF GOLD ON THE TRAIL!

NO, HUH? WHAT'S THIS? DAISY LEAVES! IT'S GOLD! I SHOULD KNOW GOLD WHEN I SEE IT!

LISTEN... OVER THERE! SOMEONE'S CALLING FOR HELP!

HELP... HELP!

HE'S GOT IT BAD! MUST BE APACHES! WHAT'S HE SAYING, WEAVER?

CAN'T QUITE MAKE IT OUT! TRY AGAIN PARDNER...

GOLD... LOST DUTCHMAN... GOLD... EL SOMBRERO...

LOST DUTCHMAN, GOLD, EL SOMBRERO! MEBBE HE'S TRYING TO TELL ABOUT A STRIKE HE MADE WHEN THE INJUNS GOT HIM!

THERE WAS TALK ABOUT A MEXICAN WHO MADE A STRIKE UP NEAR A PEAK CALLED EL SOMBRERO! SEARCH HIM! THERE MIGHT BE A MAP!

the WESTERNER

HUH! HERE'S THE MAP ALL RIGHT! ONLY IT'S TORN IN HALF... FAT LOT OF GOOD THAT DOES US!

LOOK, WEAVER! THIS MEANS THAT OUR FRIEND HAS A PARDNER! WE'RE ALL GOOD TRACKERS! ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS FOLLOW HIS TRAIL AND KNOCK OFF HIS PARD! IS IT A DEAL?

I'M IN... WEAVER, I'M SURE YOU'LL STRING ALONG!

SURE, I'M IN... AFTER SEEING THAT GOLD... I'LL BE IN ON ANYTHING!

ALL RIGHT, LET'S GET STARTED! THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE! IT'S A LONG WAY TO EL SOMBRERO... A LONG HARD WAY!

AND LEAVING BEHIND THEM A PILE OF ROCKS, UNDERNEATH WHICH, WAS BURIED THE MORTAL REMAINS OF JAKE MILLER. THE MEN PUSHED ON, ALONG THE MOUNTAIN TRAIL WHICH LED TO THE FOREBODING EL SOMBRERO... AND PERHAPS, THEY HOPED, A FABULOUS STRIKE!

LATER, A FURIOUS MOUNTAIN STORM BROKE... CATCHING THE MEN OFF GUARD...

IT'S NO USE... WE CAN'T GO ANY FURTHER! LET'S TURN BACK!

WEAVER, WE CAN'T TURN BACK! WE'D NEVER MAKE IT DOWN THE TRAIL! WE HAVE TO GO ON!

SUDDENLY THE LEDGE CRUMBLES, AND...

THE LEDGE... THEY'RE GONE, AND I'M ALONE!

WEAVER! HELP! WEAVER!

ALONE! THAT'S GOOD! IF I FIND THE LOST DUTCHMAN, IT'S ALL MINE! ALL THE GOLD IS MINE! ***I'LL FIND THE LOST DUTCHMAN... AND THERE'LL BE GOLD! GOLD! GOLD!***

INTO THE BLINDING STORM, WEAVER PUSHED HIS WAY... TO BE SWALLOWED BY THE DRIVING RAIN, AS HE SLOUGHED FORWARD IN THE CHURNING MUD... NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN... THE CURSE OF THE LOST DUTCHMAN HAD TAKEN IT'S TOLL!

the WESTERNER

TODAY, THERE ARE NO MORE APACHES. BUT EVEN NOW, THERE ARE MEN WITH A DREAM IN THEIR HEARTS, FOR THE SEARCH STILL GOES ON FOR THE LOST DUTCHMAN...A LEGEND OF THE SOUTHWEST, WRAPPED IN THE MYSTERY OF TIME...
ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS FIND EL SOMBRERO, AND WE HAVE THE MINE!
WELL, AL.. HOW DO WE KNOW THERE IS AN EL SOMBRERO?
MAYBE THERE ISN'T SUCH A PLACE AND MAYBE THERE IS! EVERY LEGEND HAS IT'S BASIS IN TRUTH! THAT'S WHY WE MUST KEEP LOOKING, BECAUSE SOMEDAY WE MIGHT FIND THE LOST DUTCHMAN...THE POT OF GOLD AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW!
WHO KNOWS IF THE MEXICAN'S CURSE WILL DESTROY THOSE WHO MIGHT FIND THE LOST DUTCHMAN... BUT SOMEWHERE IN THE BARREN MOUNTAINS IS THE SECRET... AND WHO KNOWS WHEN THE TREASURE WILL BE UNLOCKED?
THE END

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the SHERIFF'S NEPHEW

The stagecoach from Benton City was now making a turn in the road. The next half mile would be entirely down grade until the road ran parallel with the creek. Joe Travers, the messenger guard, kept turning his head from left to right. He was a tanned, weather-beaten little Westerner, with faded blue eyes and a long drooping moustache. His left hand held the barrel of a new repeating rifle. His right hand was conveniently near the butt of his colt. He turned to the driver, "Pete, if we hit the creek without any trouble, I guess the rest of the ride will be safe." The driver of the stagecoach, Pete Brown, was a middle aged bald-headed man of muscular build. He held the reins tightly in his hand and never for an instant did his eyes shift from the road ahead as he replied, "Not a person knows we are running the stagecoach today to the railroad station. Everyone in Benton City thinks we are taking it to Burt's place to have the axle repaired. Sheriff Gordon and his deputy met us at the ranch and helped us load the gold. Must be about $25,000 in bullion in that box. We have nothing to worry about, so take it easy."

Joe shook his head in the negative, "Wish I could feel the same way about it. As long as Red Roberto is on the loose, we cannot take any chances. If he tries to hold up this coach, I'll get him if it is the last thing I do." There was no need for Pete to question Joe Travers' last statement. Because, he knew that two months ago, Red Roberto, the bandit from across the Rio Grande, shot and killed Joe's brother without warning when he was acting as a messenger guard for the Cooper Stagecoach Company.

Midway down the road the keen eye ot the driver spotted a tree lying across the road. "Be careful, mighty careful," he warned the guard. "It could be an accident, and then again, it could be a trick to stop us. I am not going to take any chances. If we drive the horses faster we can ride over that tree without any damage." As the coach neared the tree lying across the road, a shot rang out from behind a boulder.

Joe Travers' body went limp and he fell from the seat on to the road. He never knew what hit him. Suddenly a figure with a red handkerchief around his face appeared on the road with a rifle in his hand. "Stop now driver, or you too weel be dead," he shouted. Pete Brown seeing Joe shot to death, had no desire to be a corpse. He climbed down from his seat repeating, "I'm obeying, I'm obeying". Then Pete helped the masked man unload the box with the bullion and watched him shoot the lock off the box. The masked man transferred the gold buillion to two large leather knapsacks, which were swung across his horse. When he was through, he mounted his horse and ordered, "If you try to follow me, you will get the same as your partner."

At noon the next day, Sheriff Pat Gordon was seated comfortably in his office. He was a man in his early forties, with a full head of chestnut hair, black eyes and a friendly smile. Seated near him was his nephew, Frank Donners. "How do you like the West? Think you might want to settle out here and try your hand at raising stock or practicing law?" The young Easterner smiled and showed a set of perfect teeth. He was in his early twenties, a tall man, but not ungainly. His wavy blond hair gave him an exceedingly youthful appearance. "I might try to open a law office, but first I must meet and gain the confidence of the folks located around here. A few minutes later both men were startled to hear shouting. The door swung open and Deputy Hank Winters entered. He was powerfully built with a large muscular neck that held his head up straight. As he spoke, he tossed his head back. "Sheriff, the stagecoach was held up by Red Roberto. He shot and killed Joe Travers without any warning, robbed the gold shipment. By now he's probably headed for Mexico. Shall I round up the boys for a posse?" The sheriff rose from his desk shouting, "Get going Hank, you know Travers was one of my best friends, and I'm going to get his killer." Then turning to his

nephew he warned, "You better remain here in the office, there may be some shooting." But a loud laugh was his reply.

Several hours later, taking short cuts across the desert land, the posse arrived at the scene of the tragedy. It certainly was very obvious that the Sheriff's nephew dressed in Eastern clothing was holding his own beside the other men. They all dismounted and started looking for possible clues. "Clever hombre," said the deputy, "to pick this place for a hold-up. He made sure we would never be able to pick up his trail. He rode through the creek on his horse and covered his tracks." The ground was still damp and Frank Donners bent down on one knee to examine something. "Uncle Pat," he shouted, "I think I have some clues." The sheriff, his deputy, and several of the men came over at once. "What's up?" asked his uncle. Pointing to several tracks in the ground, the young man explained. "There are two sets of prints made in the ground by the horseshoes. First set is light, second heavy. That means the horse standing here was loaded up with the bullion. Next to it are several clear impressions of a boot heel. I am going to cut up the ground and take back a sample of the boot mark and the horseshoe." The men looked at him in amazement "Is that what they teach back in eastern law schools?" remarked the deputy in a sarcastic tone of voice. "You have my permission," said the sheriff, "and from now on, you're going to be a special deputy "

Since there wasn't any shovel handy, it was necessary for Frank Donners to take his two samples out of the ground with the aid of a knife. He returned to the office and placed the cuts of earth upon the table. Then he sent his uncle out for flour and water. "Going to make a cake?" asked the deputy "It may not be good enough to ea., but it may send a man to the gallows," was Frank Donners' reply. When the sheriff returned, both men watched the young man make a mixture of the flour and water, then he poured it in the spaces of the horseshoe and the boot heels imprints. "I'll see you later," he said, "I'm going home to ask Aunt Tess to bake this in her oven," was his final comment.

The next day most of the town's people and ranchers from the outlying districts were assembled in the meeting hall. Frank Donners was on the platform. On a table next to him were two baked cakes, one in the shape of a horseshoe and the other a boot heel. "All we have to do is examine the boots of every man in town and the horseshoes of his horses, in order to track down the killer," said the young Easterner. A dead silence swept the room, but was soon broken by the voice of a rancher who arose and asked, "Young fellow, what makes you think it was someone from here? Brown said it was Red Roberto." Frank Donners has his answer ready. "I spoke to the driver, and he said it was a man who resembled Red Roberto, the bandit. But, I knew it couldn't be," and to emphasize his last words, he took out a telegram from his pocket which he read: "Mexico City Federal Troops killed Red Roberto and two members of his gang last week."

Deputy Hank Winters then spoke, "Do you know who the killer was?" "I certainly do," was the quick retort, "it was you!" "Take back those words, or I'll kill you," shouted the deputy. Frank Donners continued his attack at the deputy in a loud, clear voice. "You took a short cut across the desert land, held up the stagecoach, took the bullion which you hid somewhere and came back to town. When the driver told you that the guard was shot and killed, you came into the office saying the guard was killed without any warning. How did you know that, unless you were the killer? Now, to prove your guilt, let us look at your boot heel." At this command, Hank reached for his pistol, but the derringer concealed in Frank's coat sleeve spoke its message of lead first

Seated in his office, the sheriff looked at his nephew with admiration. "Hank made a full confession, thanks to you Frank. The men in town are all for you. Open your law office here and they will give you plenty of business. You have gained their confidence and they say we need a man like you in this town. But tell me, where did you learn to shoot like that?"

There was mock surprise on the nephew's face as he replied. "Why Uncle, don't you recall I wrote and told you I was captain of the pistol team at college?"

the WESTERNER

PRAIRIE SAGA

AMMUNITION....

ACROSS THE PRAIRIES CAME A STEADY STREAM OF LUMBERING CONESTOGA WAGONS... THE FAMED COVERED WAGONS...FILLED WITH GALLANT MEN, AND BRAVE WOMEN WHO CARRIED A DREAM IN THEIR HEARTS. THESE WERE THE PEOPLE WHO BRAVED THE RIGORS OF THE WEATHER...THE BLAZING HEAT, THE NUMBING COLD, AND THE RAGING BLIZZARDS...AND WORST OF ALL, THE INDIANS, WHO FOUGHT BITTERLY FOR THEIR HUNTING GROUNDS...ASKING NO MERCY AND GIVING NONE. BUT EVEN IN THE HATRED OF PRAIRIE WARFARE, THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP CAN BE EXTENDED... AND IT IS ABOUT A FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN A SIOUX AND A WHITE MAN THAT "PRAIRIE SAGA" IS WOVEN...

JUDY! JUDY! LOOK! THE AMMUNITION WAGON IS BURNING...

OH, ALLAN... DO SOMETHING... IF IT EXPLODES, WE'LL ALL BE KILLED!

SLOWLY, A COVERED WAGON TRAIN MOVES ON THROUGH THE UNBROKEN PRAIRIE OF KANSAS...IN THE YEAR 1860...

KEEP A SHARP EYE, ALLAN! WE'RE RIGHT IN IN THE HEART OF SIOUX COUNTRY!

YOU'RE JOSHIN' ME, CAPTAIN! JUST 'CAUSE I'M THE YOUNGEST IN THE TRAIN! I'LL BE AS GOOD AS ANY MAN, IF TROUBLE COMES!

DON'T DOUBT IT, LAD... HELLO...I RECKON WE'LL MEET THE SIOUX SOONER THAN WE THOUGHT! ALLAN... GO BACK AND BRING JENKINS AND THE OTHERS!

GOSH, CAPTAIN! INJUNS!

the WESTERNER

SPURRING HIS HORSE ON, ALLEN SPREADS THE WORD DOWN THE LINE..

THERE'S A SIOUX WAR PARTY UP YONDER! THEY'LL ATTACK US SURE, EITHER AT DUSK OR DAWN! THIS IS A GOOD PLACE TO TAKE A STAND! GROUP YOUR WAGONS!

OKAY, CAPTAIN!

QUICKLY, THE SETTLERS CIRCLE THEIR WAGON SO THAT THEY CAN FIGHT FROM ANY POSITION...

ALLAN, STICK CLOSE TO ME...AND DO AS I DO! THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO SAVE YOUR SCALP AGAINST THE SIOUX...AND THAT'S TO SHOOT STRAIGHT MAKIN' EVERY SHOT COUNT!

I UNDERSTAND, CAPTAIN! YOU'LL SEE... I WON'T DISAPPOINT YOU!

I KNOW, SON! YOU'RE JUST LIKE YOUR DAD! BEFORE HE DIED, HE MADE ME PROMISE TO TAKE CARE OF YOU! I'VE DONE IT FOR 15 YEARS, ALLAN! I FEEL LIKE YOU'RE MY SON!

YES, CAPTAIN! YOU'VE BEEN A DAD AND A MOTHER TO ME! THAT'S WHY I'LL NEVER LET YOU DOWN!

WILL THERE BE ANY FIGHTING, CAPTAIN!

MAYBE... IT'S BETTER TO BE SAFE BECAUSE THEY MIGHT ATTACK BEFORE TOMORROW! IT'S ALMOST DUSK, NOW!

GOSH, ALLAN, I'M SCARED!

DON'T BE AFRAID, JUDY! I'LL SEE THAT NO ONE HARMS YOU!

I KNOW YOU'LL PROTECT ME... YOU ARE MY SIR GALAHAD!

JUDY... CUT IT OUT...

CAPTAIN! CAPTAIN! THEY'RE COMIN' FROM THE NORTH!

EVERY MAN TO YOUR POST! DON'T FIRE UNTIL THEY'RE IN RANGE! MAKE EVERY SHOT COUNT! COME ALONG ALLAN!

the WESTERNER

MOMENTS LATER, THE FULL FURY OF THE BATTLE BURST ON THE BESIEGED WAGON TRAIN...

EASY, LAD, EASY! FIND A TARGET BEFORE YOU PULL THE TRIGGER!

I GOT ONE, CAPTAIN! I GOT ONE!

AGAIN AND AGAIN THE ENCIRCLING SIOUX CHARGE...BUT EACH ATTACK IS TURNED BACK BY THE DEADLY ACCURATE FIRE FROM THE SETTLERS...

AND FINALLY...

YAHOO! THEY'RE RUNNING! THEY'RE RUNNING! WE WON!

YES, LAD... THEY'RE RUNNING NOW... BUT THEY'LL BE BACK AGAIN!

THEN, AT THE CAPTAIN'S ORDERS, THE DEFENDERS SALLY OUT OF THEIR WAGON FORTRESS...

SPREAD OUT... SOME OF THEM MAY BE PLAYING 'POSSUM! WE DON'T WANT THEM CREEPIN' UP ON US DURING THE NIGHT!

IF WE FIND ANY, THEY WON'T EVER CREEP AGAIN!

TAKING HIS PLACE WITH THE MEN, ALLAN MOVES ALONG WITH THEM, UNTIL HE COMES TO A BUFFALO WALLOW...AND THERE...

DON'T MOVE! I HAVE YOU COVERED...UH-OH... HE'S WOUNDED!

GO, KILL RED CLOUD, PALEFACE! FACE GREAT SPIRIT UNAFRAID!

YOU'RE WOUNDED, INJUN! GIT ON YOUR PONY...AN' RIDE! I CAN'T KILL A WOUNDED MAN... AN' ANYWAY, YOU'RE A KID... LIKE ME!

I NEVER FORGET! RED CLOUD IS YOUR BROTHER!

AS THE INDIAN BOY MOUNTS HIS PONY AND GALLOPS AWAY...

GET THAT INJUN!

CONSARN IT... WHO LET HIM GO?

I DID!

SON, DON'T YOU REALIZE HE'D HAVE KILLED YOU IF YOUR POSITIONS WERE REVERSED!

CAPTAIN, I COULDN'T SHOOT HIM! HE WAS WOUNDED... AND HE WAS YOUNG, LIKE ME!

BAH! THAT KID NEEDS A HIDING AND I'M GONNA...

the WESTERNER

LEAVE HIM BE! ANYBODY ELSE WANT TO ARGUE THE MATTER?

NOPE! IT'S OKAY WITH US, CAPTAIN...WE'LL FORGET IT!

MAYBE THEY'LL FORGET IT! BUT I WON'T! NOT JOE JENKINS!

ON AND ON ROLLS THE WAGON TRAIN, UNTIL, ONE DAY A FEW WEEKS LATER...

ALLAN...JUST WHAT WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR... HERE'S WHERE WE'LL BUILD!

YES, CAPTAIN! IT'S THE PROMISED LAND!

SOON THE SILENT PRAIRIE RINGS WITH THE SOUND OF BUSY HAMMERS, MANY VOICES...FOR A TOWN IS BEING BORN IN THE WILDERNESS...

UH... HELLO, JUDY!

ALLAN...I...I...HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE THE INDIAN ATTACK! YOU STAYED AWAY FROM ME AS THOUGH I HAD THE PLAGUE!

WELL...I'VE.. UH.. BEEN SO BUSY ...AN'...AN...

I HEARD HOW THEY TALKED AGAINST YOU FOR LETTING THAT WOUNDED INDIAN GO FREE! I THINK IT WAS WONDERFUL...IT'S SO MUCH EASIER TO BE CRUEL THAN KIND!

YOU... INJUN LOVER! GIT TO WORK...THAR'S NO PLACE HERE FOR LOAFERS!

MISTER JENKINS! YOU HAD NO CALL TO HIT ALLAN!

OWW!

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, JUDY! MISTER JENKINS DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING...HE'S ONLY PAYING ME BACK FOR THE BLOW HE GOT FROM THE CAPTAIN... I'M WILLING TO ACCEPT THE PAYMENT!

WHY, YOU YOUNG SCALAWAY... I'LL...

the WESTERNER

IT IS FIVE YEARS SINCE THE WAGON TRAINS HAD BROKEN THE PRAIRIES... A BLOODY CIVIL WAR WAS ENDED, AND THE LITTLE SETTLEMENT HAD GROWN FROM THE FIRST CLUSTER OF LOG CABINS...

I'M WORRIED, ALLAN! THERE'S TALK THAT THE SIOUX ARE RAIDING AGAIN! THEY BURNED MILLVALE TWO DAYS AGO!

WE'RE TOO STRONG FOR THEM! THEY ARE ONLY ATTACKING THE LITTLE SETTLEMENTS!

SUDDENLY...

HOW! RED CLOUD MAKES TALK WITH HIS BROTHER!

RED CLOUD? YOU! THE INDIAN WHOSE LIFE I SAVED... WHAT IN THE BLAZES BRINGS YOU HERE?

ALLAN!

RED CLOUD NOT FORGET! YOU MUST PREPARE... GREAT WAR PARTY COMING TO BURN YOUR VILLAGE... KILL!

ARE YOU SURE, RED CLOUD?

RED CLOUD NEVER SPEAKS WITH FORKED TONGUE! TELL YOUR PEOPLE, STAY HERE...NOT TO GO FORTH TO FIGHT! OUR PARTY IS TOO GREAT... AS MANY WARRIORS AS GRASS ON THE PRAIRIES! I HAVE SPOKEN...I GO!

IF THE MEN GO, THEY'LL ALL BE KILLED... YOU MUST STOP THEM!

COME ON, JUDY! THEY'RE MEETING NOW TO DECIDE WHETHER TO GO OUT AFTER THE THE INDIANS! THEY THINK IT'S A BAND OF MARAUDERS!

INSIDE THE COUNCIL HALL...

ALL THOSE IN FAVOR OF RIDIN' OUT AN' CLEANIN' UP THE VARMINTS RAISE YOUR HANDS!

WAIT!

DON'T LEAVE TOWN! STAY AND DEFEND IT! THE SIOUX WAR PARTY IS TOO STRONG FOR US TO RIDE AGAINST IT!

LISTEN TO HIM PRATTLE... AFRAID A FEW INJUNS MIGHT GET HURT!

YOU *MUST* BELIEVE HIM! HE KNOWS...BECAUSE HIS INDIAN FRIEND TOLD HIM!

HEAR THAT! HIS INDIAN FRIEND! THEY'RE SLAUGHTERIN' WOMEN AN' CHILDREN...AN' THIS ONE MAKES FRIENDS WITH 'EM! I'LL CUT HIS HEART OUT!

WAIT YOU FOOLS! SAVE YOUR STRENGTH, YOU'LL NEED IT!

the WESTERNER

THERE IS NO REASON TO SUSPECT ALLAN! I KNOW HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH! JENKINS, ALLAN AND I WILL SCOUT THE SIOUX! THE REST WILL PREPARE TO DEFEND THE TOWN!

SOUNDS OKAY TO US, CAPTAIN!

I AGREE! I'LL WANT TO KEEP MY EYE ON THIS INJUN LOVER!

AS THE FIRST FAINT FINGERS OF DAWN PIERCE THE NIGHT SKY WITH THE TINT OF EARLY MORNING, THREE MEN PREPARE FOR THEIR SCOUTING TRIP...

ALLAN, BE CAREFUL! BECAUSE I LOVE YOU!

AND I LOVE YOU TOO, JUDY!

GOOD LUCK, JOSHUA! YOU THICK-SKINNED COYOTE... YOU'VE MADE ME CRY...

'TIS BETTER TO KNOW WHAT'S IN A PERSON'S HEART, MARY! YOU KNOW WHAT'S BEEN IN MINE FOR MANY YEARS!

COME ON, COME ON! ENOUGH OF THIS MUSH! FOR ALL WE KNOW, THE SIOUX ARE COMIN' NEARER AN' NEARER EVERY MINUTE!

AND AS THE SUN RISES OVER THE PRAIRIE...

SO YOUR FRIEND CAME HOME TO ROOST, DID HE? HE'S A SMART INJUN, WANTING US TO KEEP COOPED UP IN TOWN, WHILE HE AND HIS MURDERIN' FRIENDS RIDE UNMOLESTED! WHERE'S THE WAR PARTY?

HOLD YOUR CHATTER, JENKINS! I HAVE A FEELING... WE'RE COMING CLOSE!

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

CAPTAIN! LOOK!

TARNATIONS! RED CLOUD TOLD THE TRUTH! THEY'VE SPOTTED US...*MAKE TRACKS!*

I...I... NEVER SAW SO MANY INJUNS IN ONE BUNCH!

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE FAST!

SPURRING THEIR SPEEDY MUSTANGS, THEY RIDE FOR THEIR LIVES, WITH THE SIOUX WARRIORS IN HOT PURSUIT...

MY HORSE!

RIDE, CAPTAIN! YOU'RE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ME! GO BACK AN' ORGANIZE THE DEFENSE! WE'LL DELAY 'EM HERE!

GOOD LUCK, ALLAN!

the WESTERNER

FIGHTING DESPERATELY FOR TIME, AND FOR THEIR OWN LIVES, ALLAN AND JENKINS ARE SUBDUED BY THE OVERWHELMING NUMBERS OF THE SIOUX WARRIORS...

ALLAN, NOW YOU'LL SEE WHAT KINDNESS AND FRIENDSHIP YOU'LL HAVE AT THE HANDS OF THESE YARMINTS!

PALEFACE ... HOLD TONGUE! OUR CHIEFTAIN, RUNNING BEAR DECIDES YOUR FATE!

IN THE SIOUX CAMP, THE MEN ARE TIED TO STAKES, AS WARRIORS DANCE SAVAGELY ABOUT THEM...

WELL, INJUN LOVER...WATCH THE WAY I'LL DIE! THEY WON'T HEAR A WHIMPER OUT OF ME!

LET'S DIE FRIENDS! I KNOW HOW YOU'VE FELT ABOUT ME ALL THESE YEARS...BUT...

HAH! FEEL THE WEIGHT OF MY HAND, PALEFACE!

STOP! LET THOSE MEN ALONE...CUT THEIR BONDS!

THERE, MY BROTHER! NOW YOU AND YOUR FRIEND WILL BE FREE, MY FATHER IS CHIEFTAIN, RUNNING BEAR!

I...I DON'T UNDERSTAND, RED CLOUD...

MY SON, RED CLOUD, TOLD ME HOW YOU SPARED HIS LIFE! IT IS A DEBT OF HONOR WHICH MUST BE PAID! YOU SHALL RETURN TO YOUR PEOPLE UNHARMED!

MIGHTY CHIEFTAIN, YOU ARE HONORABLE! BUT YOU MAKE WAR! THAT IS BAD...SOON THE PONY SOLDIERS COME, LIKE LEAVES ON THE TREES! THEY WILL DESTROY YOU... IT IS BETTER TO WALK IN PEACE!

GO NOW, MY BROTHER! I WILL SPEAK TO RUNNING BEAR, FOR I, TOO, HATE WAR! GO...PEACE WILL COME TO THE PRAIRIE!

IT'S GOT ME BEAT! I NEVER SEEN THE LIKES OF THIS, PALAVERIN' WITH INJUNS!

FAREWELL, MY BROTHER!

A LITTLE LATER...

HERE ARE YOUR WEAPONS! MAY THE GREAT SPIRIT WATCH OVER YOU BOTH! FAREWELL!

GOSH, RED CLOUD...RECKON I OWE ALL KINDS OF APOLOGIES! JOE JENKINS KNOWS WHEN HE'S BEEN WRONG!

FAREWELL, RED CLOUD! ALL WILL BE WELL!

the WESTERNER

FOR A WHILE, THEY RIDE SILENTLY ON THEIR WAY BACK...
I WANT TO SHAKE HANDS WITH YOU AN' IF I COULD EAT ALL THE WORDS I HEAPED ON YOU! I'D DO IT... EVEN IF I CHOKED!
NO NEED TO CHOKE, JENKINS! IT'S FORGOTTEN! NOW LET'S GET MOVING!

WE JUST KNEW THE RIGHT PEOPLE, CAPTAIN! RED CLOUD, THE INDIAN WHOSE LIFE I SAVED, IS THE SON OF RUNNING BEAR... AND HE LET US GO! ALSO RUNNING BEAR'S READY TO TALK PEACE TERMS NOW!

WELL, BOYS LET GET BACK! MAYBE WE ALL LEARNED A LESSON!
I SURE DID! NEVER THOUGHT I COULD TRUST AN INJUN! NOW I SEE THERE'S GOOD AN' BAD IN ALL KINDS!
THE END

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